luru and Bhattiprolu mandalams in Guntur District of Andhra Pradesh hitherto good, usable ground water obtained by borowells for irrigation of agricultural lands in the entire area has of late turned saline and of no agriculture use;

(b) if so, what are the reasons for such salinity and what steps, if any, have been taken by Government to rectify the situation; and

(c) whether such thing also occured in any other part of the country, if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): (a) The deltaic area in the south-eastern part of Guntur District is having the EC values of ground water more than 2000 ms/cm affecting an approximate area of about 2750 sq km.

(b) Reasons for ground water salinity are:—

(i) Application of excess irrigation water;

(ii) Ingress of sea water; and

(iii) Over exploitation of ground water.

The National Water Policy has laid emphasis on avoiding the over exploitation of ground water in the coastal areas to prevent the ingress of sea water into the fresh water aquifers.

(c) Yes, Sir. Similar situation has been experienced in coastal Saurashtra and along the East Coast.

Pesticides poisoning

2796. SHRI B. K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state whether Government propose to declare pesticide poisoning notifiable in view of the deaths booths?

due to aluminium phosphide which is being sold/transferred by the manufacturers; retailers and Government agencies contrary to rules and regulations in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND COOPERATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI NITISH KUMAR): Under Section 26 of the Insecticides Act, 1968, the State Governments have been empowered to notify their officers for identifying all occurrences of pesticides poisoning (including deaths due to aluminium phosphide) coming within their cognigence: They are also to notify the officers to whom these reports are to be sent. Most of the State Governments have already notified such officers.

Setting up of Central Certification Authority

2797. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government's attention has been drawn to an Article under the certificate Agmark another symbol of quality published in the Hindustan Times dated the 4th August, 1990;

(b) whether it is a fact that grading under Agmark or Agmark Certification is only voluntary for products sold within the country and as per the said Article no item has been put-under compulsory granting, within the country;

(c) if so, Government's reaction thereto the reasons therefor; and

(d) whether any Central Agency has been given statutory powers to check and ban the sale of adulterated edible oils, spices and condiments, Atta, Basin, etc. in the country as lot of variations being noticed in this regard from State to State level booth.